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Barbie

Accused Nazi war criminal Klaus Barbie was ordered arrested by American occupation authorities in Germany not once but twice, the former head of Army counterintelligence there said Tuesday night.

After the second arrest order, Barbie was reported as "disappeared" - some four years before he actually left Germany for South America.

Earl S. Browning Jr., a retired lieutenant colonel, said he was "shocked" to find Barbie's name on a list of informants after Barbie's name had been put on a list of war criminals to be arrested.

Browning was head of operations for the Army's counterintelligence corps in Germany from 1947 to 1949.

Barbie, now 69, was extradited to France from Bolivia in February to face charges of "crimes against humanity" when he headed the Gestapo, a Nazi secret police agency, in Lyons when that French city was under Nazi occupation during World War II. Known as the "Butcher of Lyons" for reports of torture of prisoners under his charge, Barbie already had been sentenced to death in absentia twice by the French.

Browning said he at first had no knowledge of Barbie except that his name appeared on a list of war criminals issued by American authorities in 1946.

In his tenure, Browning said, Army investigators discovered that some of their informants were traveling from city to city telling intelligence agents the same story over and over and getting paid each time.

Consequently, in 1947 he ordered counterintelligence officers in each German city to send the names of their informants to headquarters.

"I was shocked when Barbie's name appeared on the list sent in by Munich," Browning said.

Browning said "we reaffirmed the arrest order," but was told on a follow-up inquiry "that he had disappeared."

Former agents have said U.S. intelligence services in Germany protected Barbie from French requests for extradition and helped him to escape to South American in 1951. Barbie was said to have been providing reports on communist activities in the French security agencies and uranium mines in Czechoslovakia.

Browning said he believed Barbie never actually was under the control of Army counterintelligence agents, but a parallel organization later absorbed by the CIA, the "Department of the Army Detachment."

"Our mission was protection against espionage, sabotage and subversion against American forces in Germany and the German government. We had nothing to do with uranium in Czechoslovakia or communist penetration of the French security services," Browning said.

The Justice Department is conducting an investigation of just what the U.S. involvement with Barbie was.